REPORT RESUMES

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WORDS, MEANINGS, CONTEXTS, A UNIT ON SEMATICS. GENERALLY SPEAKING, A UNIT ON GENERALIZATION. FLIGHT OF FANCY, A UNIT ON IMAGINED POINT OF VIEW. RHETORIC CURRICULUM III, TEACHER VERSION.
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EXERCISES AND WRITING ASSIGNMENTS TO HELP STUDENTS INTERPRET MEANING WHEN THEY READ AND TO MAKE MEANINGS CLEAR AND PRECISE WHEN THEY WRITE OR SPEAK FORM THE BASIS FOR THE INSTRUCTIONS SUGGESTED IN THIS THREE-PART TEACHER'S CURRICULUM GUIDE ON RHETORIC FOR NINTH-GRADERS. THE FIRST PART DEALT WITH WORDS, MEANINGS, AND CONTEXTS, AND EMPHASIZED SEMANTICS AS A WAY TO HELP STUDENTS WRITE CLEARLY AND PRECISELY. THE SECOND PART DEALT WITH PRINCIPLES OF FORMING GENERALIZATIONS. QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND ASSIGNMENTS FOR SPEAKING WERE INTENDED TO HELP THE STUDENT DESCRIBE PHENOMENA. ANALYSIS OF STRUCTURAL PATTERNS AND STYLES APPROPRIATE TO DIFFERENT SPEAKING PURPOSES WERE PROVIDED IN THE EXERCISES. THE THIRD PART DEALT WITH WAYS AND PURPOSES OF WRITING AND DISCUSSING DIFFERENT POINTS-OF-VIEW. THE EXERCISES PROVIDED A SOMEWHAT LESS RIGID WRITING EXPERIENCE THAN THE PREVIOUS MATERIALS WHICH DEMANDED CONFORMITY TO EXACTING STYLES AND DEFINITIONS. THE EXERCISES WERE ALSO INTENDED TO REMIND THE STUDENT, BY STIMULATING HIS IMAGINATION, OF THE GAINS POSSIBLE BY RESPECTING OTHER POINTS OF VIEW. THE STUDENT VERSION IS ED 010 805. RELATED REPORTS ARE ED 010 129 THROUGH ED 010 160 AND ED 010 803 THROUGH ED 010 832. (PM)

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

WORDS, MEANINGS, CONTEXTS
(A Unit on Sematics)

GENERALLY SPEAKING
(A Unit on Generalization)

FLIGHT OF FANCY
(A Unit on Imagined Point of View)

Rhetoric Curriculum III
Teacher Version

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE
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OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

WORDS, MEANINGS, CONTEXTS

(A Unit on Semantics)

Rhetoric Curriculum III

Teacher Version

These exercises in semantics are not designed to bring about the brotherhood of men. The end in mind is more modest than that: it is to attack directly those problems in student papers which the teacher usually marks with a "vague" or a "diction."

The lessons assume that if the student understands something of how words have meanings and how writers can control those meanings, he will have taken a step toward writing with precision and force. In order to build his understanding of how words mean and how their meanings can be controlled, he is asked to investigate four propositions:

(1) No word has a single meaning permanently attached to it,

(2) No word has a particular meaning until somebody uses it,

(3) The important thing about knowing the meaning of a word is being able to understand what a particular person means by the word when he uses it in a particular context, and

(4) We interpret the meaning of a word from its context.

In addition, the student is asked to create contexts which will make his particular meaning of a word clear to his readers.

The lessons prepare the way for further work in semantics in the 10th grade. At that time the student will investigate in more detail how to construct a context which, from among the many meanings a word may have, can select the one meaning he has in mind; and how to manipulate the context so that it will also select, from the many connotations a word may have, those particular connotations he wishes to attach to the word.

We hope the exercises and writing assignments will help the student to interpret meaning when he reads and, when he writes, to make his meaning clear and precise.

LESSON I

EXERCISE I

3. Some students will probably point out that the last two sentences of the second paragraph could be omitted and the meaning of the word crazy would still be clear.

4. The students may need some help in thinking of times when they first encountered a new word. Even if they can only think of times when they were told the meaning of a new word, they can probably be led to see that the physical context also contributed a good deal to their understanding of the word.

The discussion might be stimulated by pointing out words and names which are indigenous to a high school: senior, the names of school customs, the names of courses of instruction, etc.

5. The discussion might be gotten under way by placing common words, like can, sort, special, in several contexts which reveal different meanings.

Some students may want to disagree with the statement under discussion, and if the statement is taken too literally, their objection is legitimate. But it is not difficult to point out that understanding the meaning of the word depends on understanding the context in which it is used.

LESSON II

The point about the dictionary is that the editors cannot include idiosyncratic meanings because even the largest dictionary has space enough to include only commonly used meanings.

The point should also be made that dictionary definitions are only generalized approximations. The lexicographer gathers similar contexts together and writes one definition for the group. Consequently, even after looking in a dictionary and determining which of the listed definitions best fits the word in question, we must still look carefully at the context in order to determine how closely the dictionary definition matches the meaning of the word as it is used.

The intended point about the president and the vice-president is that when the president uses the word it tends to be an order; when the vice-president uses it, it tends to be advice. Students might find other subtle differences in meaning.

EXERCISE II

The instructions specify that the students should write a narrative. We thought that a narrative would be easier to write than an essay, but there is no reason why a student should not take on the more difficult task of writing a piece of exposition that will fulfill the assignment.

This exercise provides an opportunity to discuss how the richness and elaborateness of the context determine the richness of the meaning of a word in the context. Of course, the word in question may have had meanings attached to it as a result of having been used in particular contexts in the past. The word mercy, for instance, will never quite be the same again since Portia said, "The quality of mercy is not strained." And a later writer can, if it suits his purposes, refer to Portia's use of the word. But under ordinary circumstances the richness of the meaning of a word depends on the richness of the context in which it appears. You might use poems to illustrate how a word picks up richness of meaning from its context.

EXERCISE III

(a) A simple switch from noun to verb. The students might experiment with changing the grammatical function of *dress* and other words in order to determine what changes in meaning occur.

(b) The qualifiers *his* and *of matter* are signals which help to distinguish between two meanings of *nature.* These signals refer the reader to two different conventional conceptions of the meaning of the word *nature*. If the student has not formulated these conceptions--as a result of encountering the word in the past--the signals will be of no use to him. But he can begin to form those conceptions right now with the aid of these sentences and a dictionary.

It might be pointed out to the students that when *of* precedes *matter,* it cannot possibly have the meaning it has in the first sentence. But *no* preceding *matter* does not preclude its having the meaning it has in the second sentence.

(c) Here *black* is juxtaposed with *white* and *bright* and, consequently, two different meanings result. The students can probably think of other words which can be juxtaposed with *black* to give it meanings other than the two illustrated here. And they can probably think of other words which have one meaning when juxtaposed with one word and another meaning when juxtaposed with another. (Fair-foul, fair-dark; light-dark, light-heavy; for example.)

(d) *Be,* of course, is capable of an infinite variety of meanings. These sentences emphasize two of those meanings. Ordinarily the difference in the meanings of *be* are more subtle than these, as can be seen by examining other sentences in this exercise which contain a form of *be.*

(e) This is some sort of metaphorical extension, though the authorities are unable to trace its development with certainty. The mechanics of metaphorical extension and the imaginative and intellectual possibilities of handling metaphors will be taken up in other lessons. Here we only wish to distinguish between a literal and a metaphorical meaning of the same word and to notice how the context signals us that the word is to be read literally or metaphorically. The students can be asked to think of other words which commonly have both literal and metaphorical meanings and to create contexts which will distinguish between the two meanings.

(f) The difference between false hearts and false hair-pieces illustrates how an adjective has different meanings when it qualifies a "concrete" noun and when it qualifies a more abstract noun. The two *falses* might be paired with *true* (true hearts and true hair-pieces), and the differences in meaning between the two *trues* that result can also be discussed. The students might also notice how "false stairs of sand" limits "false hearts," makes it clearer and more specific; i.e., "stairs of sand" acts as a qualifier.

(g) Here some of the differences in meaning result from an historical change in meaning (in this case narrowing or specialization). The word *counterfeit* has now narrowed in meaning in ordinary usage, so that it is applied only to money. At least we feel a metaphorical quality in the word whe it is applied to something other than money. Consequently, the word now has connotations of shadiness and illegality which would not have occurred to Shakespeare's audience.

It should be pointed out how Shakespeare, by placing creation in this context, made it refer both to the Creation, the result of divine work, and to the act of divine creating. The double meaning is in the order of a pun, but it has few of the drawbacks of a pun because the two meanings are not so disparate that only their disparity is noticed; instead, the two meanings support and enrich each other.

2. The words listed in the student version are not particularly imaginative. They were chosen because they refer back to work that has already been done or ahead to work that will be done in future lessons. The students can probably think of other words which have more imaginative possibilities.

LESSON III

EXERCISE IV

It is not important that all students arrange the words in the same order. It is important that they be able to explain why they arranged them the way they did. The students should be able to see that no one of these words has exactly the same meaning as any other, and they should be able to point out greater and lesser differences in meaning.

Perhaps you will want the students to group words of similar meaning together and write a dictionary definition for each group. Doing so will give the students an understanding of the task the lexicographer faces when it is time for him to group his citation slips and write definitions. They can also come to understand that dictionary definitions are written by fallible human beings on the basis of empirical evidence, and, consequently, dictionary definitions are only generalized approximations abstracted from the contexts in which the word has been found. Usage, not the lexicographer, determines what a word means.

It can also be pointed out that how completely the lexicographer covers the many meanings of a word depends, to some extent, on the space he has available. Given the limited space afforded by a desk dictionary, he must lump his citation slips into large groups and cover diverse meanings in one definition. In the more adequate space of an unabridged dictionary, however, the lexicographer can make finer distinctions among meanings and can include rarely found meanings.

It will probably be worth while to compare the sale listing in, for example, the 3rd International with the sale listing in a collegiate dictionary in order to discover what kind of compromises with space the lexicographers have made.

EXERCISE V

It must be remembered that this is a nonsense poem--there is a limit to the amount and specificity of meaning we can assign to the words. The sentences, however, are grammatical, and nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc, can therefore be identified. The students can also discover how certain sounds (when they appear in appropriate contexts) are conventionally associated with certain vague feelings and meanings.

(1) Although both words begin with an sl sound, slippery is an adjective and slides is a noun; consequently, slippery seems the more likely substitute for slithy. This does not mean, however, that slithy necessarily means slippery.

(2) Again a distinction between a noun and a verb.

(3) This time it is the similarity of sounds that seems to suggest similarity of meaning.

LESSON IV

Probably the biggest obstacle the students will encounter when they attempt to interpret the word nature in The Merchant of Venice will be the historial gulf between our 20th century American culture and Elizabethan culture. The Elizabethan conception of the physical world and its relationship to its creator is almost as foreign to the average high school student as the religious conceptions of the Ming Dynasty Chinese. But traces of the Elizabethan conception of nature still linger in our language and therefore in our conception of the world. It is these traces the student must begin with. Then he must determine from the contexts he finds in The Merchant of Venice how the Elizabethan conception seems to differ from our own. The questions in the student version are designed to help the student discover the similarities and differences between our modern ideas about nature and the conception indicated by each context.

Act I, Scene 1.

The drift of the questions is that Nature is thought of as a creative force rather than the static world which surrounds us. Of course, for the Elizabethan, God is the ultimate creator, but Nature seems, according to this context, to be an agent through which the creative power of God works.

Act II, Scene 9.

The purpose of the first question is to show the students how, when we are interpreting an unfamiliar meaning of a word, we can begin by remembering contexts of the word which are familiar to us. By comparing the unfamiliar context with the ones we already know, we can discriminate differences and similarities of meaning.

The word offices may cause some difficulties. Some students, however, may have heard of the phrase "to perform an office," and this phrase could lead to the observation that some of the modern meanings of office still suggest a function. An office in a club is a function, and an officer performs the function of his office. The dictionary will also help.

Act III, Scene 2.

According to this context Nature is expected to be orderly in a rational way, and a miracle is a disruption of the rational order of Nature. Man, a rational creature, can, potentially, discover and explain the order of Nature, but he cannot explain miracles.

Act IV, Scene 1.

Portia says that Shylock's suit is of a strange nature. The nature of the suit does not accord with the rational order of Nature. This disruption, however, is not a miracle; instead, it results from the inability of man's fallen reason to recreate the order of Nature in the life of society.

Act V, Scene 1.

The students might discuss the natures of things other than trees and stones and how their actions accord with their natures.

1ST WRITING ASSIGNMENT

Ocelot and Kittens are offered only as examples. The student should be encouraged to make up his own word and create a context which will make the meaning of his word clear.

In the discussion of the student papers it can be pointed out that the more detailed and well organized the context is, the more we are able to infer about the meaning of the word.

2ND WRITING ASSIGNMENT

The students should choose words which are important to them personally and which lead them directly to experiences which have been significant to them. But the words they choose should also be of more than average potential significance. Using the listed words as a guide, it might be worth while to try to formulate a list of such important words before the students choose their words and begin to write.

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

GENERALLY SPEAKING

THE PRINCIPLES OF GENERALIZATION, QUALIFICATION, AND SUPPORT

Rhetoric Curriculum III

Teacher Version

UNIT IV

INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE OF THE UNIT

The ninth grade student has reached the point in the development of his thinking where he must begin to work seriously with the process of generalization; he must identify the principles and conclusions that emerge from a mass of particular facts and instances, and then check his findings to see how far the principles apply. He must generalize, qualify, review the extent of the supporting evidence for conclusions he draws. He has, of course, been making generalizations for some time, if he is a normal child. From his earliest decisions like "Mother spanks me if I get into the cookie jar," and "Parents get mad if you talk back," he doubtless progressed to more complicated generalizations based on wider experience--"People don't like to be told things they already know," or "It's always crowded downtown on Saturdays." He may already have begun to modify general statements to such conclusions as "Some people don't like to be teased." This kind of generalizing is essential in every person's progress toward understanding his world and his relationships with other people, but the time comes when he must make less casual judgments and check them more carefully in order to arrive at responsible opinions. The purpose of this unit is to examine some of the basic principles of forming generalizations, modifying them in the light of available evidence, and checking them against experience. The exigencies of life frequently require us to make generalizations when *all* the facts are impossible to know. This unit should aid the student in understanding this paradoxical problem; it is intended to help him recognize the grounds on which generalizations are based and the necessity for limiting statements so that they do not make larger claims than the evidence justifies.

In accord with the general philosophy of the rhetoric curriculum, this unit approaches the problem of generalization through purpose. The lessons are planned around some of the major purposes for which people make generalizations--to understand and describe phenomena, to evoke an impression in the reader, to determine attitudes toward other people, and to select a course of action. Analysis of structural patterns and style appropriate to the purpose are provided for in questions and exercises based on the models.

Lesson 1

The first lesson opens with a class discussion that should acquaint the student with the first principles of generalization and qualification. Each student is asked to construct a statement about himself that he believes to be factual and to write it on the blackboard. The statements can be of any kind, from such simple sentences as "I have blue eyes" or "I like riding a sidewalk surfboard" to any kind of complicated statement, so long as the student considers it factual about himself. Writing the sentences on the board may present a problem in some classrooms because of board space, but a projector may serve as well. It is better if the class can see all the statements, but the sentences can be read aloud with much the same effect. The important point is to list the possible determiners and fit them to the sentences. Determiners like *all*, *some*, *many*, *most* should be familiar from the work in transformational grammar, but some students may have listed more complex qualifiers like *a majority of* or *almost all* (here is an opportunity to discourage *most all*), or numerical determiners like *three-fourths*, *half*, and so on. The compiled list should be visible to the class. How quickly this discussion moves is entirely left to the discretion of the teacher; some classes may be able to work through the sentences in a short time, others may not. When they divide into groups to construct sentences using the various determiners, they will probably work more efficiently if each group selects a chairman and a recording secretary. The word *determiner* is not used in the student version; the students are asked to recall the term. The brief time devoted to making the noun *generalization* from the adjective *general* and the verb *generalize* should provide an opportunity to remind the class of the importance of suffixes in the form of words.

ASSIGNMENT FOR SPEAKING

The speaking assignment is intended to emphasize the need for qualifying statements. It may be useful to point out that a statement may contain a degree of truth and still be inaccurate if it makes inadequate allowance for exceptions. The grammatical difference between "All people think---" and "Some people think---" is not great; the rhetorical and semantic difference *is* great, and the student who can recognize the difference has taken a significant step in his thinking. Finding an unqualified or an inadequately qualified generalization should not be difficult, but the class may need a little prompting to think through the reasons for objecting to the statement. The students are asked in their directions to make a list of the reasons and to find an example that supports each one. This list should make a rough outline, and it may be wise to suggest that the reasons be formed into complete sentences; a key word may not actually express the reason the student intends. If he constructs sentences he may find it easier to see the relation of ideas and decide on the order of presenting them.

If time permits allowing the students to practice the speech during the class hour, the same procedure suggested in *It's All in Knowing How*, Lesson 2, is an efficient way to provide practice without disrupting an entire class period. It is easy to time speeches when everyone starts at once. Time cards changed each minute can help students judge their progress through the material they want to present; if cards are used both in practice sessions and in the presentation of speeches they can help the student develop the ability to judge his time and avoid dwelling too long on the first point or points so that he destroys his emphasis. If he has to rush through or omit his final points he may do a real injustice to his idea.

Since the student is given no specific suggestions about delivery in this assignment, you may want to remind the class of a few elementary principles. A speaker helps himself and his audience if he gets into position before he starts to speak; if he looks at his audience and talks directly to them; if he finishes his speech before he begins to move back toward his seat. Above all, he must talk loud enough to be heard and slowly and distinctly enough to be understood.

The Student Version includes a list of questions for evaluating the speeches. The questions focus on substance--clarity of the central idea and adequacy of supporting reasons. You may want to suggest some attention also to structure--whether the significant ideas stand out, whether the order of materials is effective, whether transitions are clear. Class discussion can be useful in directing attention to general problems and strengths; problems, particularly, should be kept general. If specific weaknesses are pointed out, more than one example takes the onus off the performance of the individual student who needs improvement. Student critiques can be highly effective but their usefulness depends on the sophisticaion of the critic and the class. Student critics should be encouraged to concentrate on the handling of subject matter, possibly of structure, and to point out strengths more specifically than weaknesses. The emphasis should be on what a speaker can do to improve, not on what he did wrong. His "wrongs" in speaking are much more public than his inadequacies in writing, and tactless comments can so devastate an already hesitant speaker that he may be seriously hampered in his next attempts. Comments on delivery come best from the teacher; mannerisms that interfere with effectiveness can best be pointed out in written comments or in conference. Evaluations of the speeches should leave the class with the clear understanding that they are dealing with ideas both when they speak and when they write.

Lesson 2

The questions in the student introduction to this lesson are intended to lead into the consideration of requirements for sound generalization. The models that follow help the student see that knowledge is essential, and that people may examine the same subject and construct different generalizations about it because their purpose for generalizing is different. In the first selection Roosevelt does much the same thing the class has just done in speeches: he objects to generalizations made by hunters about bears and explains why he thinks the hunters are inaccurate in their notions about species.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Roosevelt objects to several generalizations which he attributes to the hunters. They all derive from a basic misconception--that there are many species. This mistaken notion results from a failure to identify the two main species--the black bear and the grizzly. Other generalizations Roosevelt quotes from one or more hunters are: "The true grizzly is found only in California"; "any big brindled bear is a grizzly no matter where it is found"; and that any bear with "unusually long hair on the spine and shoulder," especially in spring when the fur is shaggy, is a "roach-back." The generalization that the roach-back is the most ferocious of the bears, or that the grizzly is the most ferocious, or that the cinnamon or smaller silver-tip is the most ferocious he attributes to the "average sports writer" who accepts the dicta of the old hunters.

The evidence he cites in refutation is drawn from his own more careful observation, possibly from his wide reading in natural history, which may have led him to examine details of claws and bone structure in bears that hunters would not be likely to concern themselves with. He mentions the Lewis and Clark account specifically to refute the statement that the true grizzly is found only in California. He attacks the insistence that there are many species chiefly by showing that the hunters themselves do not agree, and by giving instances of variation within a species (in Oregon the cinnamon is a phase of the small black bear; in Montana it is the plains variety of the large mountain silver-tip), and the evidence of the mated bears that hunters would assign to different species. The inaccurate notions about locale he disposes of with his own report of finding both black and grizzly bears in the Big-horn Mountains.

2. Roosevelt concedes that deciding how many species of bears exist in the country is difficult, but he clearly thinks the hunters err from ignorance and preoccupation with their own limited purpose for observing bears. They learn only enough about any game animal to be able to kill it, and their observations go no farther than examination of "condition" and fur. They generalize from color, size, ferocity, and state of fur, or from their limited experience of the locality they happen to know. His own generalizations (paragraph 2) are based on closer

observation of more distinctive features--length of claws, kind of fur, general size (with attention to variations), and habits. He distinguishes the two species, the black bear and the grizzly. He rules out as unreliable those distinctions based on locality and color of fur. But for the black bear he accepts tree-climbing habits and the tendency to live in forested regions; and for the grizzly, wider choice of habitat. He considers his basis more sound because it allows for variations that cause arguments among the hunters, and he takes account of the characteristics that seem to be constant in each type. He qualifies his generalizations about the species in the first sentence of paragraph 2.

3. Since Roosevelt has been fairly positive in his strictures against the "old hunters," the class may be interested in checking the generalizations he makes about them. He is probably basing his statements on personal acquaintance with hunters; he writes as if he has known a good many, but he does not indicate exactly how wide his acquaintance is. He challenges "popular opinion" that old hunters are trustworthy on points of natural history and concludes that *most* old hunters are unreliable. Other general statements about them include:

They study animals only to be able to kill them.
They support their views with impossible theories and facts.
They are incapable of passing judgment on questions of specific identity or difference.
They rarely agree among themselves.
They are heedless of fact (ignorant).
They ascribe wildly various traits to bears (all mere nonsense).

The qualifiers Roosevelt uses are interesting. The repeated pronoun *they* in the sentences of paragraph 1 presumably refers to *most* old hunters, whereas the references to *one* hunter and *another* are specific. The noun phrase *almost all the old hunters to whom I have shown it* is carefully qualified, but the passive verb *is dubbed* implies an unqualified number. (A passive verb--It is thought; they are believed to be--frequently indicates a broad generalization unless the verb is followed by a phrase that specifies *who* thinks, or believes, or in this case dubs). The generalization about the "average sports writer" is arbitrary, though the reference to "the more imaginative members of the 'old hunter' variety" qualifies the hunters in question. The class may consider that the sports writers are making a reasonable assumption when they believe that the practical experience of hunters enables them to offer reliable first-hand opinions about the ferocity of bears. If the students make a list of the qualifying words and phrases, they will not find *all* except in the last sentence of paragraph 1. Roosevelt uses several adverbs and adverb phrases--*rarely*, *usually*, and *with rare exceptions*.

4. The question about reliability is intended to summarize the findings of the class in their analysis of bases for generalizing. They should see that close observation and greater knowledge are likely to bring more accurate conclusions, but also that people generalize for different purposes. Roosevelt's purpose is more objective, less utilitarian than

the purpose of the hunters, who are less interested in whether there are more than two main species than they are in how hard bears are likely to be to kill. Perhaps for their purpose, separating black bears from those of other colors simplifies the problem at the outset; size may help almost as much. Roosevelt was a hunter, too, however. You might conclude by asking the class whether they would rather go hunting with Roosevelt or with one of the old hunters.

The second selection in this lesson gives a scientist's description of the varieties of bears. Cahalane, who has made studies of mammals in North America and compared his findings with those of other mammalogists, makes the major distinction that Roosevelt accepted as accurate: black bear and grizzly as the two species.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Cahalane's generalizations are based on more complete study than those of Roosevelt or the hunters, and his purpose is objective description, not related to the purpose of hunting. As a trained scientist, he writes from a background of broader knowledge, more extensive information tested against the observations of other experts. Consequently his findings are likely to be more reliable.

The qualifications in the selection are careful; even in the first three paragraphs where he is summarizing and generalizing, he includes a description of the blue bear, a rare variant of the black (paragraph 1), qualifies the figures he gives for weight and size of black bears with the adverb usually (paragraph 2), and repeats such adverbs as usually, generally, and on the average (paragraph 3). The last sentence in paragraph 3 closes with a qualifying clause in which the verb suggests the possibility of variations in size. In the discussion of grizzlies he uses many qualifiers which the class should be able to identify without difficulty. You may want to emphasize the careful use of always in paragraph 4, and the one positive statement about glossy black bears; it is the only place he says one can be sure. In the following paragraphs, qualifying determiners and adverbs are frequent, and the use of the modal may qualifies many of the verbs. The last paragraph (8) is entirely devoted to pointing out the possibility of exceptions to a largely accepted generalization. The class should be able to make a complete list of qualifiers; the only word likely to be missed is rarely in paragraph 7.

2. Cahalane bears out Roosevelt's contention that the hunters confuse the species. The distinctions he mentions in paragraphs 2, 3, 4, and 5 contain the details of evidence. The description of grizzlies in paragraphs 4, 5, and 6 suggests that confusing the species would be easy, particularly for hunters or anyone else judging chiefly by color and size. Even the experts came to blows over the types of grizzlies (paragraph 6); if mammalogists punch noses, it is scarcely surprising that non-scientist hunters should argue around their camp fires. For the hunters' purpose,

the length of a bear's claws and the shape of his skull may be less relevant than his size and color.

3. From the study of these selections the class should be ready to draw some fundamental principles about the requirements for making a sound generalization. How much guidance they need will depend on the maturity of the students. A list at this point should include:

> Sound generalizations are based on knowledge and tested observations.
> The reliability of the generalization is related to the extent of knowledge and verified observation on which it is based.
> The purpose for generalizing determines the kind and extent of knowledge necessary.
> Generalizations usually need some qualification.

EXERCISE

The class is asked to find examples of sweeping statements, first about teachers or students, second from advertising, third from letters to the editor in the local paper. If time permits, the examples brought in may be read aloud at the first of the hour, or posted on the bulletin board. You may want to call attention to the examples based on little or no knowledge, and the generalizations offered without evidence.

Lesson 3

When the students have arrived at some understanding of the basic principles of generalizing and have become aware of the importance of purpose, they are ready to explore some of the various purposes for which people reach conclusions from the examination of data. Each of the next lessons directs attention to one purpose--in this lesson, creating a general impression from descriptive details of a scene. The selection is by Ernie Pyle, a journalist who accompanied fighting troops during World War II and wrote articles for the newspapers about his experiences. Writing shortly after D-Day, which marked the beginning of the Allied invasion of German-held France, he describes the havoc he witnessed on the Normandy beach.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Substance

The first group of questions centers on Pyle's purpose and the generalization he makes. The generalization is stated in paragraph 4, broadly in the second sentence, with specific application to the Normandy invasion in the last sentence. Both statements carry the overtones of Pyle's human response to what he sees--his acceptance of the necessity for expending "anything and everything" and his bitter regret that so much loss should be necessary. He is writing for the American people at home, not just to provide them a description of a battlefield, but to make them feel the devastation of war through visualizing the human loss, the little personal things men treasured enough to carry with them into battle. The details that are called to the attention of students highlight the personal tragedies--the dog, the rock, the tennis racket, the letters. The shift to we in paragraph 4 pulls the reader into the experience along with the author; the expenditure is for all of us and by all of us. Pyle's mention of his action in picking up and then abandoning the Bible creates both a sense of the dazed, automatic actions that men make in response to disaster and the implication that people cannot cling to tokens of human value in the stress of war. Many of the details in the selection carry out the idea of necessary human loss and should be easy for the class to enumerate. The ironic contrast of uncontrollable forces and the hope for luck is clear in the reference to "whims" of the tide that covers and uncovers the bodies of heroes, the clover-leaf design in the jelly-fish, the surviving men rescuing equipment for killing other men. In paragraph 10 the repeated phrase "really nothing at all" is sharply ironic, as is the detail of the undamaged tennis racket, which Pyle labels the "most ironic" discard on the beach. The statement in paragraph 17 that soldiers had intended to "do a lot of writing in France" and the final sentence of the selection carry an even stronger irony.

Structure

The questions on structure remind the student of the possibilities in time-space progression, the physical point of view, for ordering an idea. Pyle is actually in the scene, moving about and observing. The first words establish his physical position and suggest a movement through space: he is walking along the beach. Paragraph 3 carries on this movement and specifies the amount of space he covers. Though he is on the beach, he can see the wreckage in the water. The divisions of the selection are controlled by Pyle's position, but he inter-weaves two other patterns, one the progress from water to land wreckage, another the climactic progression in the irony of human loss, as he moves from the wreckage of war equipment (paragraphs 5-11) to "another more human litter," the personal gear of soldiers (paragraphs 12-18), then to the survivors, beginning with the dog (paragraph 19), the men moving up and the sleeping soldier (paragraphs 19-22), finally to the dead (paragraphs 23-24).

Pyle's transitions are clear; he orients the reader to water, shoreline, and beach, partly by repetition of the words. He differentiates mechanical equipment and personal gear, both by separating them in sections of the description and by using words like vehicles (paragraph 7) and then listing examples. In the catalog of "human litter" he ties the lists of items together in parallel structure, with strings of series items introduced by the repeated phrase There were. Within this structure he also divides the items roughly into personal possessions (paragraphs 13, 14), and individual equipment--first for daily needs (paragraph 14), then for survival (paragraph 15, first sentence), then ironically for diversion (paragraph 16). He creates the effect of disorganized clutter by mixing the series items in a few instances--hand grenades, for example, in the same list as socks, shoe polish, and sewing kits. The interjection of grenades in this list also increases the irony, since it is in the climactic last position in the order. The repetition of such items as Bibles and letters, and the specification of the most dominant items of refuse give a kind of unity to the description; the details of the series individualize the soldiers, and the cigarettes and writing paper suggest their common experience.

Style

The questions on style which point up the irony in the selection, should create no difficulty for the student. The answers are largely implied in the preceding discussion, though focusing on the actual words can sharpen the student's appreciation of Pyle's skill in creating the effect.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

The writing assignment is intended to emphasize the importance of purpose in generalizing and to help the student understand the function of detail in creating a general impression. The first part of the assignment--reporting a disaster scene for an agency interested in assessing the extent of the damage--might be written in class and discussed if this procedure is convenient in the time schedule. The emphasis should be on careful management of details to describe accurately and objectively. The second part asks the student to emphasize his own impression by selecting the details that produced it. Here he is concerned with conveying to the reader the response he made to the scene, and his study of Pyle's description may suggest to him some possible ways of making clear his relation to what he sees--whether he is in the scene, whether he is standing still or moving about, whether he is close to it or viewing from a distance.

Lesson 4

William Beebe's delightful description of sloths provides an excellent example of another purpose in generalizing, the usual purpose of the scientist who seeks to understand and describe phenomena in the world around him that have attracted his interest. The delightful humor in this passage from "The Jungle Sluggard" illuminates Beebe's long and careful observation of the strange creatures, the sloths. In an earlier part of the selection, he explains that he first became fascinated with sloths when an injured foot immobilized him for six weeks and he had time to study the habits of sloths caught in the nearby jungle. They reminded him of slow-motion movies.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Substance

Beebe is more helpful than some authors in spelling out his intentions for the reader (paragraph 1) and explaining his sources of data (paragraph 3). He uses as evidence the actions of two pairs of sloths in courtship, and the motions of baby sloths, evidently based on the observation of many single animals. The two courtships followed the same pattern, and Beebe cites them as typical instances. The evidence he offers all supports the generalization that sloths have "strange uncanny minds," and the evidence is convincing because the reader can accept the instances as typical. Even though some courtships must have had less ineffectual culminations, or there would be no baby sloths, Beebe's sprightly description disposes the reader to believe that sloth love-making is a strange process, often ending in bafflement and relapse into ennui.

Structure

Since the two courtships are typical, and progress along identical lines, Beebe needs a full description only of the first; the second repeats the pattern, and only the variation of the ending needs to be added. The two paragraphs are related by the word second in paragraph 4, also by "these and other emotional crises" later in the paragraph. Shifting the order of the paragraphs would destroy the logical development of the idea, since the second courtship progressed a little farther (but not much), and the description leads into a summary of the slow-motion actions of sloths under "stress" of emotion.

Style

Many of Beebe's sentences should bring a chuckle or at least a smile; his gentle humor pervades the selection. Some of the humor derives from understatement, as in "any creature of more active mentality," and frequent negative statements like "nothing more serious than my own amusement," "the lack of impact," "not even such active things as dreams," and "the sense of play is all but lacking." Much more frequently Beebe gets his effect by genially ironic overstatement, sometimes heightened by a qualifying phrase. References to "a burst of uncontrollable emotion," "all the flaming fury of a mother at the flirtatious advances of a stranger," "looking eagerly about and reaching hopefully," "emotional crises" exaggerate the ineptness and languor of the sloths, and Beebe emphasizes some of them by inserting a limiting phrase. In the reference to "uncontrollable emotion" he adds "to a sloth", and after the overstated verb *swept* (paragraph 3) he increases the humor by correcting himself with a *less inflated verb*, "or rather passed." Another kind of overstatement appears in the references to the female as "the sleeping beauty," "his fair companion," and to the male as "her suitor," "her gentleman friend," "the disdained one," "the Gallant," and "her annoyer." Verbs, adjectives, and adverbs are frequently overstatements--*swept*, *throwing*, *eagerly*, *hopefully*, *delightful* uncertainty, and in the description of the baby, *supreme*, *greatly encouraged*, *confidently*. The slowness of the sloths is often expressed directly in single words--*slowly*, *tentatively*, *deliberately*, *languidly*, *dull*, *slow*.

This selection affords an unusually good opportunity to examine the effectiveness of sentence structure in carrying out the writer's purpose. The sentences themselves create the feeling of slow motion and aimless action. Most of the sentences are long, and many of them begin with a dependent clause that slows down the beginning of the action. The second sentence in paragraph 4 is a typical example. The opening clause, "When she grasped the situation," not only delays the main statement but stops the action begun in the preceding sentence. Many of the sentences close with a long phrase, a verbal, or a dependent clause that give the effect of trailing out the action. Most of the verbs are compound, and many of them suggest slow or aimless motion--*clambered*, *unwound*, *wandered*. Short verbs are frequently modified by prepositional phrases or adverbs, as in "*With incredible slowness and effort*, she freed an arm, *deliberately* drew back and then began a slow forward stroke with arm and claws."

Beebe's use of interrupting sentence elements is one of the most striking devices for controlling the tempo and adding to the humor. One of the best examples is the last sentence of paragraph 3. Some of the interruptions are qualifiers, but one or two are used to add concreteness to the preceding word. In paragraph 3 the dash precedes an appositive that explains *sloth island* in detail, and in paragraph 6 the dashes set off a similarly specific enlargement of *time*. The question set off by dashes in paragraph 3 is an inserted speculation that discounts the idea suggested in the preceding word with *slowness and dignity*.

EXERCISES

Exercise 1 is a dictionary assignment intended to call attention to words that may be unfamiliar. Additions may be necessary according to the limitations of the students' vocabulary. Part 2 calls attention to Beebe's originality in the use of words. *Perpetrate*, for example, is unusual for describing a scientist's experiments. It suggests an interesting sidelight on Beebe's attitude toward the creatures he is observing--

a kindly recognition that sloths, too, have an identity to be respected. Exercise 2 should present no problems after the discussion of nouns, verbs, and modifiers. The second part may be eye-opening to students; in a passage that depends heavily on exaggeration, Beebe uses very only once. He does use quite and most, but he depends chiefly on precise adverbs to intensify his meaning. Examining the skill with which he overstates without extensive use of the much overworked very should make an illuminating point for students. Exercise 3 asks the student to summarize what he has learned about style as related to meaning in Beebe's selection.

The short excerpt at the end of this lesson is included to show that in generalizing a scientist may formulate and check a hypothesis when his observations raise a question that interests him. Beebe evidently wondered whether sloths were as "static" as they seemed to be, and ran a test to check the possibility that they moved around a broader area than might be supposed. Even though he recounts only one instance, for this purpose one instance is sufficient to establish that sloths can travel farther than casual observation of their activities would suggest.

Lesson 5

In this lesson the student examines a practical purpose for making generalizations, a purpose that he can recognize on reflection as motivating a substantial part of his own thinking. Our attitudes toward other people are formed from the generalizations we have made from our observations, and our attitudes are more likely to be reasonable if we have reviewed our particulars with care. The materials in this lesson are concerned with teenagers and some of the attitudes adults have developed toward them. The two selections were chosen because they deal with a subject close to the interests and experience of students, and because they make use of different types of supporting evidence suitable to different purposes.

The Children of Conformity

The first selection by Leonard Buder, though it was written in 1957, expresses attitudes reflected in more recent writings about youth. The one point which students may challenge is the statement of a parent that students do not seek causes to fight for, since at the present time the Peace Corps and the programs for aiding Negro progress in the South have attracted many college students by the opportunity to participate in active service. But these programs have affected the junior high school and even the high school group less than the college population, and the basic point of the article is still directly applicable to the present young generation.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Substance

Buder's purpose is not specifically stated, but he is examining some of the reasons for the attitudes that adults deplore in young people and suggesting that teenagers, like adults, are the product of their times: adult society has engendered in the young the very attitudes that adults object to.

He is writing for adults, though not necessarily in a style or tone that would exclude young people from the reading audience. He is chiefly concerned with the attitudes that adults may or should adopt; he writes about teenagers but does not suggest attitudes they should develop toward themselves or toward adults.

The evidence he cites is of several kinds. First is a series of instances which he considers typical of teenage points of view--they could have been uttered, he says, by "hundreds and thousands" under similar circumstances, though he is aware that the cited instances do not cover all the possibilities. Then, in his analysis of what the statements mean, he cites authority: Van Til and Foshay, educators;

Riesman, a sociologist; the study of student opinion made by Remmers and Radler at Oberlin; an unnamed psychologist; and Salten, a school superintendent in New York. The evidence from the poll is statistical, though Buder quotes only the figures relevant to his purpose, not all the findings of the study. The value of the evidence ultimately depends, of course, on the competence of the authority cited; but students should notice that the authorities quoted are people professionally concerned with youth and experienced in the analysis of their problems and attitudes. Each of the single authorities offers generalizations presumably drawn from observation and study; the authorities are in substantial agreement about the tendency of young people to conform and about the forces that have affected them. The quotations form the bulk of Buder's evidence. The single instances at the beginning of the selection typify attitudes of parents, elementary and high school students. The instances appear to be taken from the author's first-hand experience, or possibly from his reading.

Buder generalizes that children and adults are affected by the times in which they live, that conformity is emphasized among American students today, that the tendency to conform may be the result of troubled times and an adult society that teaches that conformity is safer than individualism. Generalizations set forth in the quotations from authorities include all the statements in paragraphs 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 21, and 22; and Salten's statement in paragraph 25.

Buder's generalizations are qualified, except for the statement that children and adults are affected by their times; in that he uses no determiner and no qualifying modal auxiliary. In the last paragraph he qualifies Salten's statement with may be, and in the last sentence uses both adverbs (apparently and often) and the auxiliary may to qualify the statement. Except for the Remmers and Radler report, which gives specific numbers, the generalizations cited from authorities are not qualified. They are intended to be broad generalizations drawn from observation by experts, and are expressed without determiners. The psychologist uses probably twice in his statement. Students may enjoy the opportunity to measure these generalizations against their own experience and attitudes. Even if they do not agree that they themselves hold the opinions attributed to teenagers, they may know other young people who do seem to believe in the necessity for conformity.

The five "vignettes" express in direct quotes the points of view that Buder wants to discuss. The first and fourth show an awareness of troublesome issues that concern people in the modern world; the second suggests uncertainty and inability to participate in solving overwhelming problems. The third vignette sets forth the distrust young people feel at adult moralizing that offers no real help with problems, and the fifth emphasizes the compulsion to conform. All five contribute to Buder's conclusion that children reflect the times--the bewilderment at unsolved problems for which adults give inadequate assistance, and the resulting tendency to seek safety in conformity.

Buder's attitude toward teenagers is sympathetic even in the fifth vignette in which he repeats the words of the young boy objectively, without criticizing or condoning the attitude. His final paragraph reads like an appeal to adults not to condemn without considering their own responsibility for the attitudes of the young. He does not berate adults either; he includes them in the group of troubled people confronted with serious problems beyond the possibility of easy solution. He seems to be asking for greater understanding and a more realistic attitude toward the kind of teaching that might encourage individuality and creativity in children.

Structure

Buder opens with a series of instances to arouse the interest of the reader, with examples likely to be familiar in everyone's experience. He pulls them together in paragraph 6 in the statement that they show typical attitudes and interests of young people, and uses them as the basis for the analysis that follows. The point of the first and fourth appears in paragraphs 9, 10, 12, and 25; the point of the second in paragraphs 10, 14, 21, 24, and 25. The point of the third is picked up in paragraphs 12, 13, and 25, and the point suggested in the fifth is elaborated in paragraphs 10, 14, all the paragraphs taken from the Opinion Poll study (16-22), and 25.

Paragraph 6 is a summary of the vignettes; its purpose is chiefly transitional. Beside summarizing it prepares for the material to follow. Most of the essay is concerned with the reasons why teenagers have adopted the attitudes disturbing to adults. Buder devotes most of his space to these reasons because they are essential to his point; he must explain the source of attitudes in order to help adults realize that teenagers need their sympathetic understanding, not their condemnation.

Style

Buder's tone is consistently objective, though he is sympathetic with the bewilderment of young people. He uses no adjectives to describe the children he quotes in the vignettes except the modifiers that specify age. Almost no descriptive adjectives are used about young people, and no strongly condemnatory words are used about adults. The connotations of words describing adults and society (doubtful, nervous, uneasy, anxiety, fear, troubled, difficult) suggest regret at existing conditions without fixing the responsibility on any wrong-thinking group. Even the nouns and verbs suggest unsatisfactory actions or attitudes (suspicion of subversion, violence, racial tension, moralizing, distrust, conformity, pinching off, push the child) are moderate and acceptable to most people as justified by generally known facts.

EXERCISES

Exercise 1

The student is asked to select one of the instances at the opening of the essay, decide what the author thinks it shows, and then trace the evidence that supports the interpretation throughtout the essay. The discussion should have provided a starting point; if the class compares results they can easily see the framework of the selection as it develops from the opening section.

Exercise 2

The second exercise is intended to call attention to the careful use of qualifiers in the last sentence, which makes use of various kinds of modifiers. The first clause is qualifying, as is the verb may be. Many is a determiner used for the same purpose; apparently and often are adverb qualifiers. Some students may suggest that safer contains a built-in qualification; the comparative form keeps the statement from being a positive assertion that conformity is safe; it is only safer than individualism, which may not be safe either. This concept is probably too advanced for most students, but a few may discover it.

The New Upper Class, the Kids

Marya Mannes writes for an entirely different purpose, though the two selections are similar in a surprising number of ways. The title suggests an approach markedly different from Buder's; adults and teenagers are put at once into sharply different groups, and the word class carries connotations of superior power and privilege smacking of injustice. Adults are clearly to be thought of as the underprivileged class.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Mannes' purpose is to criticize the existing relationships between teenagers and adults and recommend a solution to the problem. The central idea can be stated in several ways, but its purport should be that, for the benefit of all concerned, adults should reassume the responsibilities they have unwisely abondoned for guiding young people in matters beyond the competence of the young to manage intelligently. The essay is addressed chiefly to adults, but the last sentence suggests that the author writes with a weather eye on the possible response of teenage readers. Though she makes teenagers the defendants and seems to bring charges against them, the actual charges are leveled at adults who have allowed the problem to arise. The jury is the adult group, both parents and the observing public.

The generalizations Mannes makes about teenagers are summarized in paragraphs 9, 31-40. Paragraph 9 sets forth five generalizations describing the problem the author is dealing with. The next set of generalizations (beginning in paragraph 31) concerns causes of the problem: adults have followed the Freudian dogma that children are damaged by discipline; the beliefs that children must be allowed to express themselves freely and that they should be treated as adults have produced a relaxing of responsibility in adults; the notions that learning must be easy and entertaining and that children must not be pushed have contributed to the granting of undue power to youth. A third set of generalizations concerns the results: the young have become a pressure group dictating their own decisions to adults as well. The details of such decisions are given in paragraph 33, with the added generalization that parents are beginning to realize and rebel against the domination of the young. In paragraph 34 the generalization that parents share responsibility with sellers of goods enlarges another cause, and the following paragraph (35) generalizes that consumer-training results in the superiority of teenagers in decisions of the family. In paragraph 36, the author concedes that exceptions may be found in some groups--the suburbs, private schools, and colleges, but repeats that the majority are "a destructive force against the fabric of society" because of their "inflated importance," and adds a double generalization that children have lost their innocence and that innocence is their birthright. Further generalizations deal with changes in adult attitudes: a revolt is growing; the theories of *laissez-faire* are not producing better adults; and parents are being outnumbered, thereby "reaping their own whirlwind." Conditions are increasingly recognized to be unsatisfactory, for they create an imbalance of nature costly to all.

The basic generalization--that adults, or the adult world, are largely responsible for the attitudes of the teenagers--is the same as Buder's, and the implication that the problems affect both is similar in the two essays, but the rest of the generalizations differ because Mannes' purpose differs from Buder's. Her focus is on the problems of adults, not those of teenagers, and she indicts adults more severely than Buder does. She is urging not greater understanding but remedial action. The qualifications she puts on the generalizations are spelled out most fully in paragraph 36, where she suggests the possibility of exceptions, and in paragraph 37, where she summarizes the possible "defense" of teenage conduct; also in the final paragraph (49) in the recommendation of "mercy." Qualifying words in the general statements are less frequent than in Buder's selection. Mannes uses the word *majority* (paragraph 36), but other generalizations are stated without qualifying determiners.

The *evidence* in this selection is much more extensively derived from *personal observation*, less often based on *cited studies* or *authorities* than the evidence offered by Buder. Some of the more severe terms describing teenagers are attributed to *authority*: "the serious malady of automania in youth" is quoted from the Nassau County judge, and "take-over generation" from *Life*. The *instances* which Mannes describes as typical in paragraph 8 are taken from television commercials which may be familiar to the class; the interpretation put on them is the author's. The commercials are real; the evidence of the "witnesses"--the beauty shop scene and the family council about vacations--may be drawn from first-hand experience or may be imaginary. Whether they are real is less important than whether they are typical; the girls in the class are better able to assess the plausibility of the beauty shop scene than the boys. The class may think this scene more representative than the vacation decision. The implication that father's sunburn is somehow chargeable to the decision of the children is certainly open to question; he must have had full power of decision about the extent of his own exposure to the sun. In supporting her generalizations the author depends heavily on personal observation and generally known information; though she says (paragraph 30) the observations are based on "prolonged study by qualified observers," the only observer she specifically mentions is the judge. The class should have an interesting time deciding whether the support is effective; they may want to challenge the conclusions about the action parents should have taken in the commercials, for example. Their own experience with decisions in the family may lead them to agree or disagree about the extent of teenage domination the author finds operative. The general knowledge of educational theory she assumes in paragraphs 31 and 32 may need some explanation for the class, particularly the reference to Freudian dogma, which most adult readers would find familiar. Freud's theory that childhood experiences exert a strong though often subconscious effect on adult behavior influenced educational philosophy in the so-called "progressive" movement, and was a popular enough theory to affect the attitudes of parents toward discipline. The theories mentioned in paragraph 32 should be understandable without a technical explanation.

The *attitude* Mannes expresses toward young people and adults is more condemnatory than Buder's. The *attitude toward teenagers* is reflected in the descriptive terms applied to them--"hard-eyed young men"; "crew-cut or bee-hived"; "roamers of streets"; "gatherers at street corners"; "loungers on steps"; "young mouths devoid of discrimination"; "strange cult"; "hostile herd"; and "childish chatter," which is an "act of sabotage." The criticism extends also to description of teenage tastes--"*wails* played disk jockeys"; "pornography" in comic books; "showboating." The author's *attitude toward adults* appears in the descriptive terms, "beleaguered parents," "unwanted guests in their own homes," and in such noun and verb phrases as "abdication from their rightful and normal function," "allowed to take over," "indulgence," "reaped their own whirlwind," and "contributed to an imbalance of nature."

Structure

The courtroom format is effective for the author's purpose since she wants to indict and pass sentence. Its basic artificiality permits her to take a humorous tone that softens somewhat the severity of her criticism. The format allows an unusual variation of the courtroom device because the defendant is not the real target; the charges are aimed at adults, including the jury, and the recommended action (or sentence) is for adults, not the "defendant" teenagers. The defendant is not held responsible for the offences against the "fabric of society." The basic pattern is actually problem-solving--an analysis of the problem and its causes, then suggestions for a solution. The courtroom device is also effective because the essay is frankly persuasive; it allows the author to speak as a prosecutor who is expected to bring as strong a case as possible to persuade the jury. The non-legal evidence offered allows a humorous approach that partially counteracts the extremes of a basically serious intent.

The structural pattern of the selection is surprisingly similar to Buder's. It also begins with a list of instances or "exhibits" which are offered as typical and are interpreted by the author as elements of a general problem. In both essays an analysis of causes follows, and both close with a recommendation for adults. In both, the interpretation of typical instances runs through the following analysis of causes of the problem, though Mannes interprets each "exhibit" in turn immediately after the list is completed; Buder does not. Mannes also uses quotations--from the "witnesses," the New York judge, and Life magazine. The effect of these quotations is different from that of Buder's; except for the statement of the judge, they are not citations from authorities who have made a careful study. The word "witness" serves merely to make the instances plausible to the reader. The selection depends largely on opinion.

Buder's brief conclusion is sufficient to make a plea for greater sympathy and understanding by adults; Mannes needs a longer conclusion to elaborate a suggested course of action for solving the problem. Most of the space in the Mannes article is necessarily devoted to analysis of the causes, since a reasonable solution can only be based on removing or minimizing the cause.

The transitions in this selection are unusually clear. Each section is preceded by a clear structure statement that prepares the reader for the material to follow (paragraphs 1, 10, 18, 29, 30, 31, 37, 40, 41, 42, 49). In the discussion of causes (paragraphs 31-35), which opens with the statement that there are "several," each set of causes is introduced with a phrase and often a pronoun or repeated noun that helps to connect the ideas, as in "add to these" (paragraph 32), "these same parents" (paragraph 33), "For the parents alone" and "As for the older child" (paragraph 35). Transitional phrases label additional points: "what is more" (paragraph 39), "There is one more point" (paragraph 40). Parallel structure and repeated sentence elements also keep the idea unified, as in paragraphs 41, 42, 43, and 44. Students should be able to identify the overt transitions easily, and with a little aid they can also see the extensive use of referent pronouns, repeated words like parents, young people, jury, Prosecutor, witness, exhibit, and so on.

Style

The tone of the selection is informal to the point of slanginess in some phrases, though many of the sentences are long and formally structured. Paragraph 32 affords a typical example. It is actually one long sentence, put together with a series of that clauses elaborating effect, and adjective clauses complicated by not only...but constructions. The level of language is less informal than it seems from the slang terms frequently interspersed ("messes up," "shut up," "buddies up," "young ones"); the same sentence in which "shut up" appears contains the formal wordings "accedes to the wishes of the young" and "as minimal sense would dictate." Most of the wordings are closer to the formal level of such phrases as "precocious claim to adult status" and "corollary subjugation of the adult" than to the slang level of "shut up and eat what's there." Some of the vocabulary is extremely formal--"perforce," "abode," "inordinate power," "sheaf of clippings," for example. The effect of slanginess is actually produced with a small number of words and phrases that stand out because they afford so marked a contrast.

The last sentence is consistent with the semi-humorous tone; it modifies the rigor of the "sentence" by identifying the Prosecutor with the guilty parent group and suggesting ironically the very intimidation of adults that is vigorously criticized in the discussion of causes of the problem. It also concedes the exaggeration of the proposed solution.

In this selection the author uses many words that express a judgment or opinion. The class should have no difficulty identifying numerous examples of adjectives--inordinate, rightful, hard-eyed, astounding; nouns--pornography, intimidation, domination, roamers, loungers, indulgence, sabotage, chatter; and verbs--buddies up, dictate, bombarded, catered to.

The students may need to consult a dictionary for the meaning of words besides those included in the list in question 3. "Ukase," for example, may be unfamiliar, also "commuter" for students who do not live in metropolitan areas, and "corollary." Some of the words they should be able to define from the context--"tenets," for example, and "aggregate." "Showboating" is a current term, probably local slang, for "showing off in a car," and "bee-hived" may need explanation since the bee-hive hair-do seems already to be passing from the scene. Slang terms should not be hard to identify.

ASSIGNMENT FOR WRITING

The short writing assignment in this lesson is intended to give the student practice in forming, qualifying, and supporting a statement about teenagers. He may want to take issue with an attitude expressed in one of the two selections or he may prefer to make his own comment and support it.

Preparation for Writing--the Problem of Qualification

Before he begins to examine his own opinion the student is asked to explore the possible ways to qualify statements. He is given a simple sentence "Teenagers are careful drivers" and asked to try out all the ways he can think of to qualify it. The first possibility is with determiners. He is asked to list in brackets all the possible determiners he might use to show option; the technique is borrowed from transformational grammar:

$$\left\{\begin{array}{l}\text{All}\\ \text{Some}\\ \\ \\ \\ \end{array}\right\}\ \text{teenagers are careful drivers.}$$

Next he is asked to try qualifying adverbs after the verb:

{ Determiner } teenagers are { sometimes / often } careful drivers.

He is next shown the possibilities in qualifying clauses which might open the sentence or conclude it; the position of the clause is determined by the emphasis desired:

{ If they are properly taught } { determiner } teenagers are { adverb } careful drivers.

The suggestion is also made that a qualifying clause may be stated as an adjective: Teenagers who are carefully taught are careful drivers. This is the most difficult part of the practice assignment, since it is subject to the greatest variation; the class may need help with clauses. If clauses are not the only possibility; clauses like "after they have been shown the importance of obeying regulations," or "When they think about what they are doing," and other such wordings may suggest different ways of limiting the statement. The student is asked finally to select from all the possibilities he has found the particular combination of qualifiers that seems most reasonable to him and to form with them the sentence that best expresses his own opinion about teenagers as drivers. If time permits, the sentences can be read aloud to see how members of the class have used qualifiers.

Writing Assignment

In the writing assignment the student is asked to think through his own observations of young people and formulate a general statement he can support that expresses his most careful judgment. He should study the statement carefully, make sure he has qualified it, and review the instances he can base it on. In his paper he should give his evidence; if he uses his reading as a source, he should be reminded that the reader will need to know where he found the information--who said it, and in what context. If time permits class discussion of the papers, student evaluation of the supporting evidence can be very helpful--whether the instances cited are typical, whether enough support is offered, whether the generalization is sufficiently well qualified.

Lesson 6

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In this lesson the student explores one of the most important purposes for making generalizations--the need to determine a policy or adopt a course of action. The example of the City Council decision to install a traffic light brings this purpose immediately to the level of practical application of a principle. A further application to school regulations might be effectively made; rules adopted in the school are likely to be based on observed instances of confusion or difficulty that a wise regulation can prevent or at least curtail.

These examples and the three instances the student is given to examine--the restrictions on student driving, the action of the insurance company, and the conclusion of Galileo--all are based on a common general principle that what has happened in the past is likely to happen again in the same or similar circumstances. This is the principle of predictability, and although it is subject to great variation, it is necessary to apply to practical instances when a decision is required. Decisions in the past that did not bring about the desired results we identify as mistakes to be corrected if possible by new decisions that we hope will bring better results. We call this procedure learning from experience. What we actually do is make new predictions with, we hope, a greater degree of probability for success.

The student is next led to try the principle at the level of his own experience. The example of the cat may remind him of similar behavior he has observed in animals; he may even identify the flaw in the cat's method of generalizing.

II. Dangers of Generalizing

The concept of probability is the first concern in this section of the lesson. The cat errs in his conclusion because he assumes that the circumstances are the same every time the refrigerator door is opened; he recognizes only one purpose for opening the door and fails to take into account any other possibilities. Since he cannot conceive of various purposes, he is not equipped to judge the likelihood that feeding him is the purpose operating at the moment. The example of the sun transfers the principle to man's experience and capacities. The established relationship of the earth to the sun has a longer history than mankind. That it is likely to continue is probably as dependable a prediction as anyone can make, yet the human mind can conceive the possibility that the relationship might be disturbed by some change in the earth, or the sun. Students can doubtless see that generalizations based on the principle of predictability are more likely to be valid if they incorporate the concept of probability. No prediction can be absolutely certain, but the prediction that the earth and the sun will be in the same general relation tomorrow as they are today is more reliable than the prediction that it will rain tomorrow because it is raining today. The circumstances are much more similar in the first instance than in the second.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. The students are directed to examine the reliability of the generalizations derived from the three sets of instances. In the first, they can see that the high school study might yield different results if the reasons for driving cars to school or the out-of-school habits of students who drive and do not drive were also studied. The mention of only poor students would have made the study less useful; the comparison with A students is the really significant point. The class should see that the "facts" of the study are the measurable grade averages, the number of students in each category, and the number of car-driving students. The rest is interpretation of the facts--opinion of what the facts mean.

The decision of the insurance company is based on four instances. For some kinds of conclusions four instances would be insuffieient evidence, but the class may agree that four accidents in which the driver is judged responsible can establish reasonably well that the driver is careless or incompetent, hence likely to cause more accidents.

Galileo's test of a theory or hypothesis led him to a generalization, in which accuracy of the test is important. The heart beat is an accurate measure--if the heart is normal. A stop watch is mechanically accurate, but the reflex actions of the person starting and stopping the watch might possibly affect the exactness of the results.

The cat's mistake -- if it is a mistake -- is the failure to qualify his generalization in the light of probabilities. The actions of the family would determine how far the cat was justified in expecting the same result every time. However, the class should perhaps be reminded that calling his motion toward the refrigerator a mistake depends also on human judgment of what a cat thinks, or "expects." It is possible that a cat might not actually expect to be fed even though he approaches the refrigerator; this is an interpretation people put on his action. He might just be making himself available in case someone means to feed him or might be influenced by his presence; he might be hoping some morsel of food interesting to him will be spilled or dropped accidentally; he might just be curious about any activity in the house. We are probably justified, however, in assuming that he has not the capacity of humans to assess probability, even in his own limited range of experience.

The questions about generalizations on popular music point out the necessity for polling representative opinions; members of an orchestra might be expected to show a strong preference for classical music since they are a specialized group; the class might reflect a preference for popular music based on greater experience with it. For a reliable generalization about opinion in the United States neither group would be likely to represent all possible gradations of opinion that should be considered.

The chief dangers in generalizing are summed up for the student in a list of possible tests to apply. These four suggestions cover the necessity for a sufficient number of instances, a typical sampling of various views, attention to contrary evidence, and the recognition of prejudice or preconception. Again the class should be reminded that frequently people must make generalizations and determine policy when they cannot know all the facts or collect all the possible evidence. In the conduct of daily affairs, usually all we can do is try to base our necessary generalizations on as complete a review of the evidence as possible. We can guard against ignorance and prejudice more intelligently if we recognize the limitations of our evidence and run as many tests as we can to find the greatest degree of probability.

EXERCISE

In the situations listed in this exercise the student is given an opportunity to detect faulty generalizations. In the first, May Johnson is generalizing about all the students in Hillsdale School from the conduct of two girls in one action. This conclusion is not only based on too few instances, it also judges a broad attitude from one action that may have other possible interpretations. In the second, Mrs. Black is making the same kind of hasty generalization and also equating skipping school with delinquency. She might be suspected of harboring a preconceived notion that most young people are delinquents and looking for confirmation in any possible student action. The instructor who based his conclusion about students in general from the expressed preference of honors students is not studying representative opinion. Students in other classes might consider repetition useful, and might like large group teaching. The conclusion from a study of children in trouble with law enforcement officers that comic books cause juvenile delinquency is open to criticism on several points. The class should be able to raise numerous questions--what kind of comic magazines had the children read? What else had they read? Exactly how had the reading affected their actions? Did they form all their ideas from reading alone? and so on. Determining exact causes of actions is extremely difficult at best; certainly to isolate the influence of comic magazines from all the other influences that may have operated on children to produce delinquent behavior would require exhaustive study, and to prove that the reading of comics was the primary cause would demand more conclusive evidence. The student reporter who expressed surprise that an athlete should be a good student apparently had accepted the generalization sometimes made that all athletes are stupid though brawny. The surprise of the interviewer that an English teacher liked skiing suggests the same brain-brawn generalization in a different form, or possibly the generalization that English teachers are constitutionally opposed to anything that is active or anything that is fun.

The Thurber selection treats the dangers in generalizing in a vein of humor that delights as it informs. It is a genial kind of reductio ad absurdum and provides as effective a discussion of fatuous generalizations as one could hope to find.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Substance

The stated purpose in the essay is to describe the author's new collection, initiated after other collections had proved space-consuming or become "diminished" by the absent-minded piracy of friends. The actual purpose is broader and more penetrating: the essay is an exposé of the unwarranted generalizations that fill casual conversations. Thurber does not dissect the causes and constructions of sweeping statements; he defines them by descriptvie words (libellous, half-true, idiosyncratic, etc.) and by examples. Students should have no difficulty constructing their own literal definition.

Thurber's classifications are set forth in paragraph 2. When the students reclassify the statements, they should include the generalizations added in paragraphs 6, 7, 8, and 9. Most of these would fall into the classification of hasty generalization based on too few instances, but "People would rather drink than go to the theater" and "Sick people hear everything" may be based on observation of atypical individuals. The statement about peach ice cream, as well as most of the statements about women, might be said to reflect preconception. The four statements Thurber refutes in detail were all made by women; the statements most likely to have been made by men ("Gamblers hate women" and "Sopranos drive men crazy") he considers to have an "authentic ring."

In attacking the reliability of the generalization about pianos in Japan, Thurber questions the authority of the lady who made it by giving her ridiculous claim to special knowledge. The carefully chosen verb seems shows that Thurber disclaims responsibility for the statement, as any reasonable person would. Even if a singsong girl were an authority on the incidence of pianos--a more than dubious assumption--her marriage would scarcely transfer authority to a great-niece. The actual reason Thurber gives for rejecting the dictum is that Japan, as a great imitator of Western culture, would imitate the owning of pianos. Since this conclusion rests on a generalization derived from movies (Japan, made out in movies as a great imitator), it is no more firmly established than the lady's; even the reference to the Saturday Evening Post article pokes fun at the whole matter of conclusive evidence and the naiveté of uncritically accepting printed statements.

Thurber hears an "authentic ring" in the generalizations about gamblers and sopranos possibly because of predilections about women. The statement in paragraph 2 (the tendency of women to generalize broadly) suggests the same attitude he seems consistently to express: that women are irrational creatures, dogmatic in their unreasonable notions and, like the General's daughters, contemptuously bossy. If members of the class are familiar with "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" and "In the Catbird Seat," they may recall the domineering females in these stories who threaten men's confidence and comfort.

The anecdote of General Wavell's imaginary breakfast is used to refute the sweeping statement of the lady that generals are afraid of their daughters. The lady has generalized on the basis of a single instance, and Thurber does establish his point that the example shows chiefly that the daughters are not afraid of the General. But the anecdote suggests other subtle implications--the General is defeated not by fear but by masculine resignation in the face of illogical female counter-attack. It suggests also the confident assumption of women that the male does not control the household, whatever despotism he can exert elsewhere, and that women must expect to reassert their authority when men get "out of hand."

Sweeping or hasty generalizations are "lovely" to Thurber. He is amused to the point of fascination at the illogicality they reflect and describes the most outrageous as "rare and cherished" items in his collection. He himself makes several sweeping statements, which he does not label, often about women, and about generalizations themselves. His classifications are generalizations, as are the predictions he makes in paragraph 9 about what will happen to the collector.

Structure

In the development of his ideas, Thurber moves from the introductory explanation of the disadvantages he had found in collections of objects (paragraph 1) and the superiority of his present collection to the classification of generalizations (paragraph 2), then to a study and refutation of several of the items in his list of examples, each study beginning with an account of the source (paragraphs 3, 4, 5, 7, 8). Finally (paragraph 9) he sums up the hazards of making such a collection and closes by pointing out the great advantage of pleasure to the collector in his "declining years."

"In conclusion" is at first glance a misleading transition, since it does not mark the real conclusion. It does serve as a subtle means of emphasis; it creates an expectation of a final point, which Thurber builds by delaying.

In the first paragraph of the essay, the opening sentences about the hazards in collecting objects prepares for his later discussion of the hazards in his own type of collection. In the final paragraph he talks again about advantages, this time the advantage of a collection that provides pleasure without requiring storage space or protection against loss. The references to "collection" throughout the essay serve to unify as well as emphasize. Thurber unifies also by picking up details in later references, as in the repetition of finger-tapping and rewrite men mentioned first in paragraphs 6 and 7, used again in paragraph 9. These references are skillful because they pick up former ideas, join them, and relate them to a final point. Both rewrite men and finger-tappers are thought to be "crazy" or at least not "all right"; the designation of the statements about one as "questionable" and the other as "abusive" adds to the humor, particularly since the rewrite man is within Thurber's own experience and the reference gives the effect of personal defense. The reference in paragraph 7 is both an amusing collection item and a planted clue to be exploited in the conclusion.

Besides repeating references to collections and refuting statements listed earlier in the essay, Thurber unifies by opening each refutation the same way--by explaining where he heard the generalization. His careful organization of material and the detailed development that purports to be logical analysis of the generalizations contribute greatly to the purpose of poking fun. The detailed refutations are not really logical at all. They make the point by digressive stories that explode the reliability of the statement by making it ridiculous without actually offering conclusive evidence. The resulting contrast creates an amusing effect of mock logic entirely appropriate to the purpose.

Style

Thurber's style is always delightful. This selection might be called Thurber at his best except that Thurber is always at his best. One of the most striking characteristics of his style is the masterfully controlled shift of level in the language. It moves from formal to informal within sentences, frequently in specific words or idioms ("musical set-up in Japan;" "cackling the evening away"), or in the use of series items in which the last is both concrete and anti-climactic ("stolen or juggled or thrown at cats"; "no zithers in Madagascar, and no dulcimers in Milwaukee"; "fire control, range finding, marksmanship, and love-making"). Thurber is also a master at suggesting a special kind of language in one succinct phrase, as he does in the anecdotes of General Wavell. "Strong directives issued" and "at table" suggest a military terminology natural to the general; "eat his kippers" suggests in one noun the British household. Repeating the accent of Charles Boyer in "their fran" sharpens the humor already created in the dialogue. "A whole case of Chateau Lafite" conjures up a swift picture of an expensively stocked wine cabinet. Thurber's attention to the connotations of words also increases the mock serious tone. "Impalpable" and "intangible" as he uses them have both literal denotation appropriate to his meaning and possibilities of connotation that enhance the humor: the generalizations may be impalpable to the collector, and as he shows at the end, the preoccupation of the collector may be impalpable to the conversationalist who suspects him of being "a long way from all right." "Intangible" may mean "non-stealable" or simply "abstract." Many of the words and phrases in the first paragraph seem to set a serious tone--"monograph"; "may be regarded as having been discontinued"; "diminished collection"; "suffers from its easy appeal to the eye and the hand." The shifts of level in "not considered cricket" and "slip them into their luggage" should alert the reader to look for irony; the elaborate euphemisms create a humorous contrast early in the selection.

An excellent example of the principles of incongruity and anti-climax appears in paragraph 4, where the series of verb phrases in the first sentence fall into musical rhythm reinforced with repeated sounds (the phrases will scan); yet they build a humorous contrast between prosaic instruments and exotic places, and then make an anti-climactic drop in the final element of the series with a switch to exotic instrument and prosaic place. The same technique is repeated without music in the last two sentences of the paragraph where Thurber seems to be validating his point with statistical evidence but follows it with a pseudo-emphatic statement that shifts emphasis to a triumphant credulousness that dissolves his "proof."

Thurber uses somewhat the same technique in paragraph 3 where he builds up a picture of the movie scene as if it were serious then disposes of the whole business with the word "absurd." The ironic use of "lovely" is particularly effective because it exploits the connotations of the adjective to suggest feminine rhapsodizing over items in a collection as well as Thurber's amusement at unwarranted generalizing in superficial conversation.

EXERCISE

If the students follow each step of the exercise they will work through a process of refining conclusions in the light of additional evidence. The first two sets of words should lead them to the old rule "i before e except after c"; the third adds the exceptions i before e spellings in words where the vowel is pronounced like the a in way. The fourth asks them to select reasonable generalizations from the list provided; they should be able to form a rule for themselves that uses all the information.

ASSIGNMENT FOR WRITING

The writing assignment offers the student three possibilities from which he should select one. It is intended to provide a choice that enables him to write the kind of paper he considers most interesting and helpful to him; it is not a triple assignment. If the student prefers to write up a scientific experiment he should be encouraged to describe it so that students not familiar with the material of the course in science can understand what he has discovered and how he has arrived at his conclusion. If the papers are read aloud he can learn from the questions and comments of the class whether he has made himself clear; if time does not allow oral reading and discussion, asking students to read each other's papers and comment on the effectiveness can provide a useful check.

If a student chooses to work out the second assignment he can base his generalization on somewhat more informal observation, but he must still compile his information as carefully as possible. The subjects suggested are not exhaustive; he may want to examine habits not listed, or choose a current or local fad. Again he should be encouraged to include in his paper an account of his procedure in collecting his evidence. This assignment is within the abilities of every student, and it may show him that the findings of a second or third period of observation can require a revision of tentative conclusions he reached after his first observation period. He should be urged to keep careful records each time he stations himself in a position to observe.

The third assignment is the most complex and may appeal most strongly to the superior student. Studying newspapers of an earlier year can be enlightening; it jogs the student's time sense to envision a world he is not completely familiar with and compare it with his own day. He may see similarities and differences in the news accounts--even in the advertisements and the cost of items for sale. The assignment specifies news stories, but it may be necessary to limit the subject of his paper to certain kinds of news if the study is too broad. Local or national elections, dramatic news events, recreations and social affairs are possible limitations of materials. If newspapers are not available, the student interested in this assignment may be able to find book issues of news magazines or other periodicals. Students attempting this assignment may need more advice from the teacher than those working with the first two; it is a more difficult job of organizing material. All students can profit from reading and commenting on the work of other members of the class.

REVIEW EXERCISE

The final review is a means of putting together all the principles covered in this unit. It can be accomplished in class discussion, in group compilation of principles, or as a notebook exercise. At some point the class should discuss the final list. Again it is wise to make sure every student understands that very few generalizations can be universal; in practical life, reviewing all the possible evidence is usually difficult if not impossible. If the student has learned that most generalizations must be qualified, and that all generalizations should be considered with careful recognition of the limitations of the evidence on which they are based, he has taken a valuable step toward critical thinking.

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

FLIGHT OF FANCY

(A Unit on Imagined Point of View)

Rhetoric Curriculum III

Teacher Version

PURPOSE OF THE UNIT

The work of the ninth grade rhetoric curriculum has guided the student into analysis of various problems in the management of ideas in writing and speaking. He has most frequently been concerned not simply with reporting facts and observations but with interpreting experience thoughtfully, with due attention to the evidence on which interpretation is based. The last unit in the year's work is intended to serve two major purposes. It first reminds the student that whenever he explores and expresses his opinion he will be happier and more useful in the world if he recognizes that his opinion is not the only intelligent interpretation possible to make from available evidence. The materials in this unit are intended to remind the student, by stimulating his imagination, that he may gain by respecting other views of the world than his own. The lessons are also intended to provide a somewhat lighter kind of writing experience. He has worked with exacting materials in the study of generalization and other complicated concepts; now he can review the principles of expressing considered views in a lighter vein, and he may experiment with ways of presenting ideas indirectly.

Lesson 1

The first lesson introduces the student to imagining a different view of the world with the Old English riddle "Storm on Land." The poet writes from the point of view of the storm as it roars across the earth to be eventually "swallowed down." The storm is chiefly describing itself and its own actions. Though the student is told in an introductory note that the poem is a riddle, he is not asked to guess the riddle; the title is included in the Student Version.

The questions for discussion are chiefly intended to direct the student's attention to the point of view in the poem. The storm is talking, and describes itself as strong, brave, fierce, wild, cruel, destructive, and--by implication--controlled by an outside force, not by its own will. The actions described are all destructive--burning homes, wrecking palaces, uprooting peaceful groves, and generally wreaking havoc. In line 12 the reference is to trees which have sheltered men and protected the world but are uprooted by the storm and borne on its back.

The most interesting point of the poem is the attitude the storm seems to express about itself and its actions. It does not revel in the exercise of power nor gloat over its destructiveness, yet it makes no apology for the pain and death it leaves in its wake. The storm assumes no responsibility for the devastation it is fully aware of spreading, but it suggests a regretful acceptance of conduct forced upon it. It harbors no ill will for men; its attitude toward people is sympathetic, as the careful choice of words indicates. The buildings wrecked are not just houses; they are "men's homes." The groves uprooted were "peaceful," and the blown trees had "sheltered" and "protected" men. The storm is aware of the sounds of pain and death, and calls itself wild and cruel for destroying homes.

The explanation for an apparently incongruous attitude lies in the two questions at the beginning and the end of the poem. The storm has no control over its actions, nor over its origin and ending. Exalted but unknown Powers hurl it far and wide--send it out and eventually see that it is "swallowed down." The two questions emphasize the point that the Powers are unknown. Both men and the storm are subject to them.

Lesson 2

The second lesson provides examples of stories told from the point of view of non-human creatures. The first selection, taken from Virginia Woolf's story Flush, tells of a little dog's "terrible" experience when he is stolen from a shop and held for ransom by a gang of thieves who kidnap pets along with their other robberies. Most of the class should be familiar with the story of Elizabeth Barrett Browning. They may not know about her famous cocker spaniel, though he was so dear to her that she took him along when she eloped with Robert Browning and went to Italy. Students may need help in visualizing the scene of the story in London of a grimier day before the time of electric lights and sanitation laws. Streets were lighted with flares or torches, rooms with candles; houses were ill heated by today's standards, if they were heated at all. Clothing was also different--men wore heavy boots, and women's dresses, which touched the floor, were much more cluttered with ribbon and lace decoration than modern styles permit. The sounds of street traffic did not include car motors, horns, and the screech of tires; but in a horse-and-carriage era the crack of whips referred to in the final paragraph was a familiar sound to Londoners and their dogs.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Substance

The story is told almost entirely from Flush's point of view, and the author has sustained the suggestion of Flush's limited vision by the details she has chosen to include. The darkness, damp, and chill of the place he would quickly feel; what he sees is consistent with his floor-level view. He is aware of light, and of people, but the descriptions of people and their actions are largely restricted to Flush's experience of them. He first sees people as boots and draggled skirts, a heavy hand that clouts him. The people themselves are never actually described; they are pictured as they look to Flush--a "hairy ruffian," terrible faces leering in at the window, "horrible monsters," "demons." When he is finally released by the hairy ruffian he is chiefly conscious of the enemy face and of big fingers fumbling at his neck. The only description that suggests full apparel, not just boots and skirts, appears in the brief details about the monsters who are ragged or "flaming with paint and feathers"--the cheaply dressed women who have apparently done most of the stealing of jewelry. Flush can see the paint and feathers because these people are squatted on the floor.

When the action touches Flush directly the author adroitly builds the impression of movement from above: the hand that beats Flush descends from darkness; the entering ruffians kick the dogs aside. The drinking and quarreling mentioned in paragraph 4 are not described in detail, and none of the words of the people are quoted. Flush would recognize quarreling by the tone and the rough actions; words would mean nothing to him, and they are not used.

The reader can follow the events of the story clearly through Flush's sensations. The kidnapping is related through Flush's experience with it, and his sensations give the setting of the room in which the dogs are imprisoned. The reader can follow the action of the thieves through the details of what Flush sees and hears; even though Flush himself does not understand the significance of the bags of jewelry, the reader sees that the people who stumble in are a gang of thieves. Through Flush's awareness of growing darkness and the arrival of more people, the reader learns that the thieves gather at the end of the day to drink and quarrel over the loot. Flush's release and return home are also told mainly through his actions and sensations.

The point of view changes in several places, most markedly in paragraph 7, where it switches to Miss Barrett and her concern for Flush. The shift is abrupt, but the reader has been prepared for it by many references to Flush's faith in Miss Barrett and suggestions of her fondness for him. He is actually on his way back to her when the emphasis shifts to his mistress and her anxious waiting. The shift back to Flush's point of view is smoothly made in the first two sentences of paragraph 8 when Miss Barrett's impression of the men is contrasted with Flush's. Brief shifts from Flush's point of view to the author's occur in the comment about the shrieking cockatoo whose accent would have shocked his owner (Flush could not have known that an easily horrified widow in Maida Vale owned the cockatoo), and in the mention of dates and places in contexts that sustain the emphasis on Flush.

Structure

Questions in this selection are interestingly used. Flush asks no questions about what is happening to him; the events in which he participates are told in declarative sentences that suggest Flush's acceptance of what is happening without any attempt to understand it. At the point where he is about to be returned to his owner, his sudden fear that he may be killed is expressed in questions, but it is the only use of questions to express his response to events. Otherwise, questions are used to suggest Flush's hope that Miss Barrett will come for him and to show the uncertainty his experience arouses in him about what is real. He wonders, in questions, whether the life he recalls really happened, whether Miss Barrett and Wimpole Street truly exist. One question is used to suggest Miss Barrett's distress; she wonders whether Flush is dead or alive.

The purpose of the first sentence in paragraph 1 should not be difficult for students to see; it states the central idea. The function of the last three sentences in paragraph 3 is equally apparent; they sharpen the effect of misery by creating a contrast with the pleasant life in Wimpole Street.

Style

The sentences in this selection are relatively short; the longer sentences are usually made up of short clauses in parallel structure. Frequently the sentences are lengthened by appositives (As his giddiness left him he made out a few shapes in a low, dark room--broken chairs, a battered mattress), or by series items (they were half-famished, dirty, diseased, uncombed). These structures help to suggest a dog's one-thing-at-a-time thought process. The appositives also create the effect of a first impression and then a closer look, as in the shapes that became definable as chairs and a mattress the appositives serve to reinforce the effect of darkness and dim vision. Flush recognizes objects as his eyes adjust to the dark and as he overcomes his first shock and is able to look around.

The questions about people and actions are intended to help the students see how skillfully the author has kept the emphasis on Flush by relating all the action through its effect on him. For this purpose the passive voice is useful; it centers attention on the victim of action. The author has used the passive voice to describe the kidnapping, the transportation of the dog across London to his prison, the arrival and tying of Flush to some "obstacle," since the agent is less important than the victim for the purpose. References to parts of people--legs and hands and boots--in action that follows carries out the same purpose of focusing on Flush; the verbs are active, but the agent is depersonalized. Boots and skirts stumble in and out; a hand clouts Flush. The only complete action by people in the opening paragraph is that of the children who crawl out of corners and pinch the dogs. They are on Flush's level, and he can see them. Later in the selection he sees the thieves drinking and quarreling, but most of the references to people emphasize boots, hands, skirts, and kicks.

Words and phrases that describe the place where Flush was taken are plentiful and should be easy to identify. Students may be interested in the author's handling of detail in the description; she has had an unusual problem of creating an impression of a place clearly enough for the reader to visualize it, without destroying the effect of giving only Flush's limited view. Objects in the room that are shapeless to Flush must be identifiable by the reader. The author's basic technique has been to use non-specific nouns--children, animals, dogs, something, monsters, ruffians--and to depend heavily on specific verbs and verbal adjectives to create the effect for the reader. The people are not individualized, often not even distinguished as men and women, but their actions are much more specific. They are squatted, hunched; they paw and claw the jewelry; they kick and stumble and sprawl and stagger. The selection of detail is equally important; the author has chosen carefully the detail that is consistent with Flush's perceptions and at the same time significant to the reader. "Draggled skirts," for example, tells the reader at once that the women who wear them are not fastidious; they are doubtless underprivileged and probably negligent. A "stump of candle similarly is not beyond Flush's ability to perceive literally, but it tells the reader more than it tells Flush about the general state of the place it lights and the kind of people likely to frequent such a place.

To some extent Flush thinks like a human; at least he is able to classify himself and the other kidnapped dogs as well bred. The illusion of a dog's reactions is well sustained--the sensations are plausible, as is Flush's bewilderment; he does not try to make sense of what is happening to him. He speculates only about whether Miss Barrett will come and get him, not about why he has been stolen or what his captors are like as individuals and hope to gain. He is not interested in the people at all, except to fear them. A human in that situation--a kidnapped child, for example--would view the whole experience differently, and the author would doubtless have selected different details of scene and actors. A child would be more interested in the whole room, and perhaps particularly in the openings--doors and windows and where they might lead. Faces leering in at the window would tell a child that the room was on the ground floor; this he would want to know. A child, too, would be more concerned with the whole situation: why he had been kidnapped, what the plans for him might be. He would above all be interested in the people as individuals--which ones were likely to be sympathetic, which ones were likely to treat him roughly, how likely they were to kill him, and what chance he would have to escape them. Even a young child would be concerned with the people.

EXERCISE

The exercise is intended to make students aware of the importance of specific words and the connotations they carry. Without the precise language the author has used, the paragraph would be flat and neutral; the sinister overtones would be absent, and the gathering could be any kind of assemblage of poor people, for an unspecified purpose. Students should be able to identify words that suggest filth, words that describe the people, and words that show Flush's fear. The class might be divided to answer question 3; part of the group might compile a list of the words describing the place, another group might list the words describing people, and a third group might list the words that convey Flush's fear.

The Peregrine Falcon

by Robert Murphy

Robert Murphy's story of the Peregrine Falcon uses many of the same techniques observable in Virginia Woolf's story of Flush, but the tone and effect are quite different. The capture of the falcon engages the reader's attention, but makes much less demand on his sympathies. The falcon is not, like Flush, the victim of villains who abuse her and seek their own gains; Varda's captor is prepared to treat her well, interest himself in her welfare and training, and regard has as a cherished possession.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Substance

The story is told chiefly from the point of view of Varda, the falcon, but several times it shifts to the point of view of the falconer. In the first paragraph the shift to the falconer is smoothly made by the direction of Varda's attention to the Jeep, which she ignores, the tiercel, then the falconer. The reader is then prepared to learn the falconer's thoughts and intent. In the last sentence of paragraph 1 the emphasis shifts from the action of the falconer to Varda's seeing it, and the reader is prepared for the shift back to the falcon's point of view, which is clearly signaled by the opening phrase (to her) in the next paragraph. In paragraphs 3 and 13 the point of view shifts to the falconer's, in each instance with a clear mention of the falconer to keep the reader from being confused. In several other places where the actions of the falconer are related in active verbs the author sustains the effect of telling the story through the falcon's eyes by restricting the description to the actions of the falconer and avoiding any suggestion of his opinions or feelings.

The author uses another technique observed in the Flush story when Varda recalls the familiar world from which she has been snatched. Briefly in paragraph 9 she thinks of the wide, safe sky, and in the final paragraph she seems to recognize that the old world is gone. The purpose in this contrast is much the same as it was in the Flush story, except for the ultimate effect intended by the author. Varda's memory of the wide sky does not shake her sense of reality as Flush's memories shook his, nor does it enlist the reader's outraged sympathy. The falconer is not a hairy ruffian, and the reader accepts his view of the capture as readily as the falcon's. (Students may be interested to reflect that Virginia Woolf made no shift to the point of view of the thieves.) Even readers who have some reservations about the capture recognize that the falcon will not be mistreated. The author's purpose is to evoke in the reader not sympathy for a hapless victim but admiration for the cleverness and spirit of an intelligent bird.

The falconer's actions in feeding Varda are all deliberate, calm, gentle. The description is concentrated in paragraphs 3, 8, 10, 11, 12, and 13. Many of the sentences combine two or more short clauses; often the clauses use compound verbs and repeated phrases. These structures help to create the effect of simple, repeated action to wear down the falcon's resistance. Very short clauses help to suggest Varda's anger and frustration, as well as her impatient attempts at defiance.

Structure and Style

In paragraph 9, the author uses the same technique Virginia Woolf found effective in Flush for controlling the point of view. The actions of the falconer are described as movements of the hand only, for the hand is the part of the man Varda is aware of.

The structure of the selection is simple; the main idea, that Varda has accepted the forging of the first link in the chain of captivity, is stated at the end, and the author has depended on time-order relationship of ideas to prepare the reader for the statement of the thesis.

The action in paragraphs 9, 10, and 11 is centered on Varda's attempt to get away from the gloved fist and to reject the food offered her. The action is described from Varda's point of view; the man is only a hand and a glove. In paragraph 9, the passive verbs contribute to the effect of inexorable action beginning to have its intended result. The author makes much less use of evaluating words than Virginia Woolf did in describing Flush's experience. The captors of the dogs were ruffians, demons, monsters. Her they are only "creatures she had learned to avoid." The actions of the London thieves were violent--kicking, quarreling, cursing; the actions of the falconer are dispassionate, tireless, calm, gentle. Varda's world of capture is "new" and "alien," and though her seizure violates her dignity, the man's actions are not horrifying. Throughout the selection, the language is precise but matter of fact. It does not ask the reader to identify emotionally with the falcon--only to respect her and admire her spirit. The descriptive words applied to the falcon suggest power, spirit, and intelligence--dignity fury, menace, unbeaten, not stupid.

EXERCISE

The two selections in this lesson have presented the point of view of non-human creatures. An interesting form of this technique may be found in many contemporary cartoons and comic strips; the little creatures in the Pogo strip and Snoopy in Peanuts are well known adaptations of this approach. Numerous cartoons in current magazines and newspapers picture the world as seen by non-humans. In this exercise students are asked to bring to class a cartoon that uses such a point of view and to be prepared to explain the point it expresses. If an overhead or an opaque projector is available the cartoons may be displayed, and they can all be posted on the bulletin board. The assignment permits every student, or as many as time allows, to speak briefly and informally to the class.

Lesson 3

In the first two lessons the students have explored points of view of non-humans. In this lesson they progress to examining a more sophisticated purpose: the use of the imagined point of view to make a comment about human nature or about society. The first two selections, from Don Marquis's book archy and mehitabel, are supposedly letters from archy, a cockroach who inhabits Marquis's office and types his letters at night when the office is vacant. Archy cannot punctuate his letters or make capitals because he can type only by jumping from key to key. In the first selection he introduces himself as a poet in a former life who has now sunk to the state of cockroach. He explains that he sees things from the underside now, and he talks about the food scraps he finds in the wastebasket and the danger he escaped when mehitabel, the cat, nearly ate him. In the second selection he comments on human nature in his encounter with warty bliggens, the conceited toad.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

In these poems the reader must follow the thought without the help of punctuation. The conversation of archy and warty is not too difficult to understand because the beginning of each speech is marked by a new paragraph. The author is pointing out the absurdity of seeing one's self as the center of the universe. Archy makes the sage comment that human beings should not laugh complacently at warty; he is typical of many people in his self-centered ideas.

The formal language in the "poem" becomes humorous in its contrast to the subject matter. Archy seems to be an educated cockroach, having, after all, been a poet in his previous existence. In the third stanza the style is faintly Biblical in "the sun to give him light," and "literary" in the word order of "to make beautiful the night." The final lines also use inflated language for humorous effect. Punctuation would perhaps make the first reading easier, but doing without it not only forces the reader to follow the lines carefully but also increases the plausibility--and the humor--of the typing cockroach. It helps to sustain the point of view.

EXERCISE

The exercise is designed to show how carefully the author has planned the lines to preserve clarity in the absence of punctuation. The reordered lines are much less easy to follow; the students should see that Marquis has set the lines to indicate thought groups. In the rewritten passage, breaking the name and separating subjects and verbs or parts of infinitives and phrases makes for confusion and bumpy rhythm.

In his third letter archy describes the lightning bug, the "hick" from the country whose vanity leads to his undoing. Not all the class may be familiar with lightning bugs, or fireflies, the little insects that fly in the summer and glow when they light up the back part of their bodies. They fly slowly enough to be caught in the hands; children in parts of the country where lightning bugs are common enliven summer evenings by catching the bugs and holding them in glass jars to observe at close quarters.

In this selection the speeches are a little more difficult to separate, but each one is introduced except the first, where the context makes clear who is talking. The little creatures name the bug broadway because the name carries connotations of bright lights, and he likens himself to the Statue of Liberty as the most spectacular of famous lights. Archy thoroughly disapproves of the bug; his opinion is reflected in words like hick, proud of himself, vain, which he applies to "broadway." With obvious pleasure he announces that he "had to take him down a peg." The language level shifts in this poem to suggest bumpkin diction in the bug's speeches--some punkins, like we do.

Like warty bliggens, the conceited bug is typical of some humans, as archy points out. He delights himself with his lightning, but the thunder of applause from others does not follow his showing off. The last two lines put a fitting ending to broadway's boastful career--mehitabel eats him.

In the selection from Gulliver's Travels the non-human point of view is used to make a comment on society. The non-humans are not animals, birds, or insects; they are people with a difference--tiny inhabitants of the strange kingdom of Lilliput, where the shipwrecked Gulliver finds that he is a giant. In this brief passage his Lilliputian captors are listing the items they have found in Gulliver's pockets. Since the kind of possessions Gulliver carries are entirely unfamiliar to the little people, their conjectures about what each object is permit the author to make satirical comments about humankind.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

The cloth the Lilliputians cannot explain is Gulliver's handkerchief; to small people the texture would seem coarse; the woven threads might seem to them like ropes. From their height the handkerchief is the size and texture of a rug (foot cloth). The strange engine that mystifies them is, of course, Gulliver's watch, covered by glass, which they can only describe as a transparent metal. The figures are the numbers, and the incessant noise the ticking of the watch. Swift's statement about people is contained in the speculation of the Lilliputians that the watch is Gulliver's god; he has said he seldom acts without consulting it and called it his oracle. The ironic implication is that people are dominated by the sense of time; their freedom of action is restricted by it. Other implications about the concerns of society can also be drawn.

ASSIGNMENT FOR WRITING

The assignment in this lesson to write from an imagined point of view should allow the student a choice. In the first paper he described the world as seen by a non-human object. In this paper he should try the more complicated job of making a comment on people or society through an imagined point of view. He may use a single creature like warty bliggens who is typical of a trait in human nature, or he may imagine human-like people (Martians?) who find our society peculiar. Students may need guidance in determining the comments they want to make. The point of view they choose must be kept consistent; all the details must fit the circumstances they create. In thinking about the paper, they may begin by choosing a creature or fanciful "human" and then consider how some of the things they and their friends do might appear to the stranger. If students want to experiment with the "poem" format of Marquis, they should be encouraged to try--so long as they maintain consistency. The class may enjoy reading the papers and discussing the comments expressed.